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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 000138

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SUBJECT: POST SUPPORTS GOES REQUEST FOR DHS ASSISTANCE RE
ISSUING TRAVEL DOCS

Classified By: DCM Michael A. Butler for reason 1.4 b & d

1. (C) On September 2, 2005, DHS Acting U/S Randy Beardsworth visited El Salvador to discuss the mechanics of the Secure Borders Initiative (SBI) with Salvadoran officials. During these discussions, U/S Beardsworth noted that SBI required the GOES to issue travel documents for deportable Salvadoran citizens in a timely manner. He advised Salvadoran officials that DHS would be willing to provide financial and technical assistance relative to the timely issuance of travel documents.

2. (C) After the initial visit of U/S Beardsworth, the Embassy and pertinent Salvadoran officials formed a Deportations Working Group to discuss expediting the issuance of travel documents to deportable Salvadoran citizens. Throughout our discussions, the Salvadorans have repeatedly expressed their concerns about issuing expedited travel documents to violent criminals and suspected gang members without first properly documenting and fingerprinting these individuals. They have also outlined legal impediments to conducting consular interviews via digital video conferencing.

3. (C) On December 20, 2005, a Salvadoran delegation traveled to Washington to deliver and explain to DHS a request for financial and technical assistance relative to expediting the issuance of travel documents for deportable Salvadorans. The proposal addresses the Salvadorans' concerns relative to fingerprinting and digital video conferencing. The request comprises numerous line items which total US\$8.5 million. Post has been notified that another Salvadoran delegation will arrive in Washington on January 19, 2006, to discuss further the Salvadoran request for assistance.

4. (C) COMMENT: Post realizes that a request for US\$8.5 million may not be realistic. Nonetheless, we strongly encourage DHS to consider the Salvadoran proposal. Financial and technical assistance relative to digital video conferencing will permit the limited number of Salvadoran consuls to interview deportable Salvadorans and issue travel documents in a timely manner. Assistance offered to capture digitally the fingerprints of criminals and suspected gang members can be shared with USG law enforcement agencies. Each of these benefits of assisting the GOES directly addresses USG national security concerns. Although DHS may decline to fund the proposal in its entirety, we suggest that DHS analyze and evaluate those aspects of the proposal that directly relate to our national security. END COMMENT.
Barclay